Short supply of medicine for ophthalmic use

2452. DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that medicines used for the treatment of blindness are in short supply;

(b) what are the names of medicines required to control blindness;

(c) what steps are being taken to provide these medicines at cheap prices;

(d) whether it is also a fact that number of medicines marketed for the treatment of other diseases have side effects of blindness;

(e) whether such side effects have come to the notice of Government;

(f) if so, the names of those drugs and finished medicines being marketed in our country; and

(g) what steps have been taken to ban the sale of these medicines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Blindness can be caused due to a variety of different eye diseases, such as trachoma and other associated infections; malnutrition, trauma, cataract, glaucoma, diabeties and many other congenital and acquired diseases. It is, therefore, not possible to frame the list of all the medicines required to control blindness. However, some of the commonly used medicines to control blindness are indicated below:—

(i) Antibiotic Eye drop and Ointment.

(ii) Sod Sulphacetamide Eye drop and Ointment.

(iii) Steroid Eye drop and Ointment.

(iv) Atropine Sulphacetamide Eye drop and Ointment.

(v) Eye drop and Ointment.

(vi) Pilocarpin Eye drop and Ointment.

(vii) Phsostimine (Eserine) Eye drop and Ointment.

(viii) Tablet Acetazolamide (Diamox)

(c) Almost all the drugs required for the control of blindness are available in the country and at reasonable prices.

(d) to (g) Government is not aware of number of medicines having side effect of blindness. Adverse drug reaction of hydroxyquinoline group of antidiarrhoel drugs (enteroquinol etc.) which caused blindness in sensitive Japanese population only has been reported. Experts have opined that such adverse reaction has not been reported in India. The popular brands containing such drugs are:

Chlorombin tablets

Dinoquin tablets

Diodoquin tablets

Entero-quinel tablets

Nivembin tablets

Iodocycline tablets

Expert bodies like ICMR are of the opinion that Hydroxyquineline group of drugs are quite cheap, effective and safe drugs for the treatment of diarrhoea. Trachoma and prevention of blindness control are one of the National Health Programme. The new Drug Policy envisages availability of drugs meant for the National Health Programme at reasonable price.